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Sri Krishna Bhajanamrta

By Srila
NARAHARI SARKARA THAKUR

Translated by Bhanu Swami
Sanskrit/Bengali Editing by: Sri Subhag Swami

“Narahari was the fortieth (branch of the Caitanya tree).”

PURPORT BY Srila Prabhupada

“Narahari das Sarkara was a very famous devotee. Locan das Thakur, the elaborated author of Caitanya-mangala, was his disciple. In Caitanya-mangala it is stated that Sri Gadadhara das and Narahari Sarkara were extremely dear to Sri Caitanya Mahparabhu. .”

Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta
Adi-Lila Chapter 10

INTRODUCTION

The Sri Krsna Bhajanamrta is the original work of Sri Narahari Sarkara Thakur, the famous devotee who offered Lord Caitanya the personal service of fanning with camara. The Sri Krsna Bhajanamrtam is possibly the only know book which deals with practical aspects of dealings between disciples and guru including when the guru falls down. Therefore Sri Krsna Bhajanamrta is very timely for better understanding the authorized manner in which to deal with sensitive issues regarding initiating gurus and siksa gurus. H.H. Bhakti Caru Swami informed me of the existence of this book and without his encouragement we would not have endeavored to locate it.

The Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust, which Srila Prabhupada founded for preserving the Gaudiya Vaisnava Sampradaya culture and heritage, in addition to promoting its unity and mutual cooperation, has been researching lost shrines and holy places for nearly a decade. The newest project is to locate lost or out of print literatures in original language and to publish reference copies for use of sadhus and scholars around the world. The Sri Krsna Bhajanamrta is the first book

located in this new project.

The Sri Krsna Bhajanamrta was only printed once as far as is known in the Bengali year 1309, which brings it to the late 19th century. Only 95 copies were printed and has therefore been out of print and unavailable for quite some time; but with research the last known copy was located at Sri Khanda, the birthplace of Sri Narahari Thakur, in torn and blackened condition; even the threads in the binding had turned to dust. By Lord Caitanya's mercy the book was loaned to the B.S.C.T. for republishing and translation.

The Sri Krsna Bhajanamrtam is 64 pages long, but only the first 16 pages deal with guru-tattva. The remaining part of the book deals with Sambandha-tattva in regard to Lord Krishna's expansions, energies, demigods, etc. Since ISKCON, at present specifically needs sastric direction in regard to some aspects of guru-tattva the verses 27-67, which deal specifically with the subject matter of guru-tattva and Vaisnava relationships are being presented.

Although the first 19 verses simply form the introduction to the book, they are also included, since they help the reader to get a clearer understanding of the background to it and Sri Narahari Thakur's purpose in writing Sri Krsna Bhajanamrtam. Verses 19-26 give the explanation of topics which the book covers, other than guru-tattva, so they are not included.

Verse 1

I offer my respectful obeisances to that incarnation of Godhead who has distributed more unlimited causeless mercy than any other Avatar. He is the total Lord of my life—Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Verse 2

I offer my respectful obeisances to Sri Sukadeva Goswami who is like the ripened fruit of the trees of devotional service. He is eternally relishing in the transcendental mellows in devotional service.

Verse 3 & 4

During this Kali Yuga, when the time of Lord Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Lord Sri Nitayananda Prabhu's transcendental pastimes become unmanifest. Their lordships become the object of transcendental research and discussion. At that time all level of devotees including uttama adhikary, madhhyama adhikary, and kanistha adhikary shall always be in anxiety and it will be at all times. They shall almost feel uncertainty in their hearts regarding the correct understanding of the eternal truths of devotional service.

Verse 5 & 6

I offer my respectful obeisances in full surrender to the thousands and thousands of previous Vaisnavas and particularly to those paramahamsas, perfect souls, who meditate constantly in pure loving devotion on the lotus feet of Lord Sri Caitanya

Mahaprabhu and by His mercy are studying all of the Vedic literature in regard to devotional service. Following in the footsteps of these great spiritual authorities I shall explain the clear transparent conclusions of the scriptures in their concise, condensed form, with some detailed explanations.

Verse 7

I, Narahari Das, consider myself to be a fool. Therefore, how will I be able to explain this most difficult subject matter on the absolute conclusions of the sastra? Will the learned Vaisnavas bless my deliberations that they may not be false or deviate from the authorized conclusions of the sastra in any respect.

Verse 8

In any case, whether someone has all good qualities or whether one has no good qualities, whether one is a fool or whether one is a great pandit; who is there in this material world who is able to completely understand pure devotional service to Krsna.

Verse 9

In my sleep while dreaming I said the above words. While dreaming I was meditating upon the words of previous authorities and great Vaisnava acaryas and their conclusions on the authorized sastra in regard to pure devotional service. While thus engaged in my dream suddenly my heart became filled with spiritual bliss as if I had entered and taken shelter of an ocean of transcendental nectar.

Verse 10 & 11

Just at that time Lord Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared holding the hand of Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya. Lord Caitanya said, "sadhu, sadhu." As lord Caitanya said these words he was laughing and he came and stood before me saying, "What our have said is certainly true. Now awaken and arise." Saying these words again and again Lord Caitanya disappeared from my vision.

Verse 12

Thereafter, meditating on the lotus feet of Lord Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu who is known as Gaurahari, I got up from my bed and I was feeling great separation being deprived of his transcendental association, I considered my unqualified self blessed by Lord Caitanya's causeless mercy upon me.

Verse 13

Feeling myself blessed by the mercy of lord Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu and remembering His merciful words, while being absorbed in the remembrance of His transcendental glories I was immersed in an ocean of transcendental bliss. At that time I could not understand my actual condition.

Verse 14

On the strength of the mercy of Lord Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu I have decided to write something. Using my intelligence I have considered the truth of devotional service and although considering myself a fool I have written in my

own hand, sometimes in verse and sometimes in prose, this supremely auspicious “Bhajanamrta.”

Verse 15

In this Kali Yuga the great paramahansa perfect devotees who have descended to this universe in order to purify it have blessed me with their remnants which I have accepted. As I am strictly following in the footsteps of these liberated souls this work is completely purified with their blessings.

Verse 16

At the outset of this work my humble prayer is that all pure, non-jealous devotees of Lord Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead may listen to these authorized words as I have heard them from the great Vaisnava authorities of the disciplic succession.

Verse 17

It is well known from the authorized Vedic literatures that in this Kali Yuga, through the power of the holy name of Lord Sri Krishna, all Vaisnavas are equal and qualitatively non-different from Lord Krsna. However, it is seen that amongst the Vaisnavas that sometimes in some places some Vaisnavas appear greater or lesser. In such cases how is it to be understood?

Verse 18

Amongst all of the assembled Vaisnavas there is the initiating guru and the instructing guru. In regard to them what type of behavior is authorized.?

Verse 19-27

not included (see introduction)

Verse 28

Now listen to the authorized conclusions of the previous authorities.

Verse 29

It is certainly true that all Vaisnavas are on the same transcendental platform. However, although amongst Vaisnavas there may be a difference in spiritual strength, how will the less intelligent materially attached sense-gratifiers, who become afraid justly seeing the horrifying appearance of beggar mendicants, ascertain the actual strength of a saintly person? Since they cannot distinguish between a lesser spiritual force and a greater spiritual force, they do not know how to deal appropriately with different saintly persons. Therefore they treat every one the same. Since they don't know how to distinguish the specific character of greater spiritual personalities from lesser spiritual personalities rather than risk their destruction for neglecting a potentially spiritual personality they treat everyone on the same level.

Verse 30

However all those practicing Vaisnavas progressing on the path of devotional

service, who have heard and understood the conclusion of the revealed sastras and are therefore endowed with special intelligence are able to recognize who is more spiritually powerful and who is less spiritually powerful. Those who are expert in the science of devotional service can understand in whose body what quantity of Krsna's spiritual potency is present. Being able to understand who has less spiritual potency and who has more spiritual potency, they offer special treatment considering the scriptural injunctions in this regard.

Verse 31

If one can distinguish between the greater or lesser spiritual strength of a person but does not accordingly offer respect, then that person shall be held guilty for that offense.

Verse 32

For the reason mentioned before, if two Vaisnavas come at the same time, one of greater strength, one of lesser spiritual strength, first one has to offer respect to the Vaisnava of greater strength then offer to the Vaisnava of lesser strength.

Verse 33

Should the respect due to a Vaisnava of greater strength or to a Vaisnava of lesser strength be offered at the same level if they come at a different time? Equal respect should not be offered to both even if they are not present at the same time.

Verse 34

If a volcano type of fire is burning, the wise man will not first put out.....first one has to be able to extinguish the volcano fire then a candle of deep light can easily be extinguished. Similarly if one is able to appropriately receive and respect Vaisnavas possessed of great spiritual force to their satisfaction, then one shall easily be able to satisfy those Vaisnavas of lesser potency.

Verse 35

If a person of small spiritual advancement sees a great devotee endowed with considerable spiritual potency being worshipped and given respect, should the less advanced person become angry upon seeing this? For this offence against the more advanced person's spiritual position the foolish offender will ruin whatever spiritual potency he possesses. Subsequently, in the future, such angry persons simply plan how they can punish those who have participated in such worship.

Verse 36

Those who are well-versed in all of these matters, having heard properly from authorities, those Vaisnavas who are enthusiastically engaged in worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead and all those transcendentalists who are practicing the spiritual path, know the truths in regard to these matters. However, in spite of knowing these truths, if they do not appropriately offer worship, then they will be spiritually ruined. However, if they consider the respective spiritual strength or lack of strength and accordingly offers respect then they will certainly

advance in Krsna Consciousness.

Verse 37

For those who take shelter of the great Sumeru mountain what can others do to harm them? Others should offer them worship as devotees with respect and service.

Verse 38

One should never engage in criticizing a Vaisnava or neglecting a Vaisnava even in joking. For Vaisnavas are so glorious that there is nothing to regret even if one sacrifices ones life for their benefit.

Verse 39

No one should find fault with a Vaisnava for his activities or behavior. What person is free from the influence of Kali Yuga or has perfect pure behavior and action?

Verse 40

Because the Vaisnava devotees of the Lord are always meditating on Lord Sri Krsna the contamination of sinful activities cannot come upon them. Because a Vaisnava's body has the fire of Krsna Consciousness within it, even if they are fallen, this fire of Krsna Consciousness will burn up to ashes any material contamination.

Verse 41

However, those who are not able to understand the respective levels of spiritual potency may take shelter of this example. As in the Ganges there are many waves, and some of these waves are larger than other waves but all of the waves are considered to be sacred, one wave being not considered more holy than another wave, similarly, all types of Vaisnavas, those who are spiritually strong and those who are not so strong, can be offered equal worship. Considering this perspective in such circumstances that can be accepted as perfect worship. Here completes the conclusion in this regard.

Verse 42

All Vaisnavas are considered as guru or spiritual master.

Verse 43

Amongst all of the Vaisnavas the initiating guru (diksa-guru) and instructing guru (siksa-guru) are special.

Verse 44

It is proper to offer these two special respect.

Verse 45

Amongst all of the other spiritual masters these two (diksa-guru and siksa-guru) spiritual masters' orders are to be followed.

Verse 46

If one's initiating spiritual master and instructing spiritual master are of small spiritual potency, or in other words, if they do not pose a special power to give spiritual instruction on worship for devotional service, then one may listen from the mouth of other great advanced Vaisnavas and understand the special instructions. However, thereafter, the disciple must go to his spiritual master for his confirmation or instructions.

Verse 47

One should not disobey the order of the spiritual master.

Verse 48

Just as a faithful son may go out for earning money and subsequently brings to his father the wealth gained, later the son may ask for some allowance from the father and whatever he receives from the father he is entitled to spend of his own enjoyment. Similarly, a disciple may hear some instructions from another advanced Vaisnava but after gaining that good instruction he must bring it and present it to his own spiritual master. After presenting them, he should hear the same teachings from his spiritual master with appropriate instructions.

Verse 49

If the son earns money but does not give it to the father and instead, directly enjoys the wealth, he is considered to be a fallen son and a sinful person. Similarly a disciple who listens to the words of other Vaisnavas, even if their instructions are proper and true, but does not reconfirm these teachings with his own spiritual master and instead directly personally accepts these instructions, is considered a bad disciple and a sinner.

Verse 50

For this reason, in all circumstances all Vaisnava are offered respect like of offers respect to one's spiritual master. However, with body, mind and words one serves one's own spiritual master.

Verse 51

Even if the performance of one's devotional activities one has disobeyed the spiritual master, still one should not give him up, but should remain faithfully with him, because all authorities say that the shelter of one's own spiritual master is best and perfect (even if another spiritual master is more powerful).

Verse 52

Kindly understand this example:

Just as one respects one's father as a guru, his (the father's) older and younger brothers are also similarly respected, but nonetheless, the father is worthy of the most respect. Notwithstanding the above, if the father's guru, even if he is family related, comes, one should double the respect, as he is the spiritual father of the father, or the guru of the guru. He is offered twice the puja or respect.

This behavior if recognized as appropriate by all authorities.

Verse 53

Just as if, during daily life, the brothers (older or younger) of the father criticize him, still one takes shelter of one's father, similarly, one remains under the shelter of one's own spiritual master, even if he is criticized by his older or younger god brothers. Just as one depends upon one's father for one's livelihood, one must depend upon the strength of the spiritual master for advancing in devotional service.

Verse 54

If a father or spiritual master or husband are not possessed of outstanding qualities even then they are always worshipable.

Verse 55

Taking shelter of the above-mentioned persons one may even disagree with those senior to oneself.

Verse 56

In this world, what kind of person is there who can remain alive at the expense of his father's or guru's defamation or disgrace?

Verse 57

Everyone considers that if their spiritual master is very powerful then he himself is powerful but that if his spiritual master is less powerful, then he is, therefore weaker, and according to the attitude of the spiritual master the disciple gains the same attributes. Those disciples who are intelligent can understand the desires of

the spiritual master directly through their intelligence. Other disciples, two are less intelligent understand by directly hearing instructions from the spiritual master. These activities are being practiced since time immemorial.

Verse 58

Learned Vaisnava authorities say that these instructions are the perfection of religiosity.

Verse 59

If the spiritual master commits a wrongful act breaking Vaisnava relative principles then in that case one should in a solitary place, confront him for his rectification using logic and appropriate conclusions from sadhu, sastra and guru references, but one is not to give him up.

Verse 60

One should not be hesitant or fearful because one is confronting or challenging a spiritual master.

“For it has been prescribed that one must appropriately discipline even a spiritual master who is:

- *bewildered about what he should or shouldn't do;
- *who is inexperienced or ignorant;
- *who has deviated from the Krsna conscious path;
- *or if he is bewildered by false pride.”

Verse 61

This statement of the revealed scriptures is applicable at all times and under all circumstances.

Verse 62

The natural behavior of the Vaisnava devotees is to take complete refuge of Lord Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, accepting Him as their principal and real shelter. The very life of the Vaisnava devotees of the Lord is singing the glories of Lord Sri Krsna, describing and expanding the fame of Lord Sri Krsna, and discussing the nectar of His transcendental pastimes.

Verse 63

The authorized course of action is to continue, as before, with one's prescribed devotional service. One may take guidance through or instructions from the Vaisnavas, as all Vaisnavas are considered guru or “spiritual master,” or one may

use one's own intelligence, duly considering the relevant instructions from sadhu, sastra and guru. In all cases one should continue in one's devotional service.

Verse 64

However, if the spiritual master:

- *acts envious towards 'isvarebrantah', that which is connected with the Supreme;*
- *is bewildered regarding the Supreme Personality of Godhead;*
- *is averse to expanding the fame of Lord Krsna;*
- *personally refuses to accept hearing or chanting about the glorious pastimes of Lord Sri Krsna;*
- *has become totally bewildered, listening to the false praise of ignorant persons and day by day is more materially contaminated and fallen*

then the spiritual master must be renounced.

Verse 65

Under those circumstances one should not doubt, "How can I give up my spiritual master?" With a strong desire for achieving spontaneous devotional service and attaining the lotus feet of Lord Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, a devotee accepts the shelter of a spiritual master, if that spiritual master takes on "asuric" qualities or a demoniac mentality then it is one's duty to reject such a demon "asura" guru and in his place accept a Krsna conscious spiritual master and worship him.

Verse 66

By taking shelter of the strength of the Krsna conscious spiritual master's devotional service the ill effects or contamination of the demoniac previous spiritual master is counteracted and destroyed. These activities are recommended by all Vaisnava authorities as the authorized conclusions of the sastra.

Verse 67

During the pastimes of Lord Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu there have been many practical examples of the above.

This concludes the deliberation and final conclusions of sadhu , sastra on guru on the spiritual master and related matters.

END